

Curriden



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Ashland RD

REPLY TO: 1950

Date: November 2, 1994

SUBJECT: Project Initiation Letter
Gate 2 - Fly Wilbur Environmental Assessment

TO: Laurie Walters-Clark

I would like you to assume the role of interdisciplinary team leader and environmental assessment writer for the analysis of the Fly Wilbur Project Area as outlined on the attached map. Follow the direction and guidance given in the Custer National Forest and National Grasslands Land and Resource Management Plan, R1 Forest Plan Implementation Guide, R1 *Our Approach to Effects Analysis*, and the Code of Federal Regulations.

Proposed Action

At this time, the proposed action is to utilize timber management as a tool to maintain or improve the long-term diversity and quality of habitat for wildlife and to provide for the continuation of livestock grazing and implementation of intensive range management systems.

Purpose and Need for Action

The purpose and need for action will be determined by the IDT as the difference between the existing and desired conditions. Consider the range of natural variation while defining the desired condition. I would like the team to pay particular attention to the Ashland Ranger District's Deer Guidelines in regards to cover/forage ratios. While providing for an improved cover/forage ratio, I would like you to consider utilizing cutting timber to provide fuel breaks to provide long term protection of critical wildlife habitat and the Home Creek Butte Communication Site from wildfire.

Scoping

I would like the IDT to develop a public participation plan for this EA.

Objective

The environmental analysis should fully cover the impacts, cumulative effects, special standards and guidelines, and necessary mitigations for the proposed actions. You and the ID team will then provide the Forest Supervisor with a full range of alternatives from which to make a decision about the future of the Fly Wilbur analysis area as we implement the forest plan. The team should look at ways of promoting ecosystem management within the analysis area while meeting the Land and Resource Management Plan.



Issues, Concerns and Opportunities (ICO's)

Your scoping should define the ICO's and the driving issues. Keep in mind that comments received from the public are not automatically driving issues.

Team Composition

Besides yourself, the following core members are assigned to the environmental analysis: Vice Jim Farrell (Wildlife Biologist), Dennis Sandbak (Silviculturist), Dean Millett (Forester), Pam McAlpin (Fuels Specialist), Green Kent (Transportation Planner) and Vice Frank Heisner (Soil Scientist).

In addition to the core team, the following people will serve as consultants: Wilford Birdinground (Range Conservationist), Clint McCarthy (Forest Biologist), Eileen Spencer (Archeologist), Ron Hecker (NEPA) and Cheri Bashor (Forest Range/Ecology Staff).

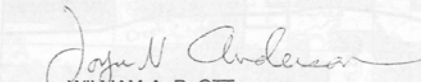
Once scoping is complete and the issues are defined, I would like you to validate the composition of the core and consultant team members.

Completion Date

By September 30, 1994, I expect the IDT to have fully defined the issues and have tentative alternatives developed. The final EA should be ready for public comment by January 1996. The target date for the decision notice is March 1996.

The following is a list of decision points where I want to be involved as a minimum:

- Definition of the Purpose and Need for Action and the Proposed Action
- Scoping Letter
- Determine the Issues, Concerns and Opportunities
- Determine the Significant Issues
- Review of final alternatives


WILLIAM A. R. OTT
District Ranger

cc: N.Curriden, Forest Supervisor, S.O.
J.Clark, Forest TMO, D3
Core Team Members
Consultant Team Members

Encls.



DATE